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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: GOE BEGINS CONSULTATIONS TO REMOVE STRUCTURES  
ALONG GAZA BORDER

Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs  
William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) A Ministry of Defense official with direct knowledge of Gaza border security issues told poloff on August 6 that GOE security services had started deliberations over the possible removal of buildings located closest to Egypt's border with Gaza. He said that to improve tunnel detection and counter-smuggling efforts, Egypt would like to clear the structures within 50 meters of the border in Rafah and within 150 meters of the border beyond the Rafah area. He explained that although the GOE owns the strip of land under assessment, through the years squatters, including Bedouin, have occupied the land and constructed buildings. As tunneling and smuggling have become more sophisticated and tunnels longer, he said, it has become increasingly important to remove structures where tunnels can be hidden.

[¶2.](#) (C) According to the MoD official, the GOE's priority is to clear the Rafah area first. During the week of July 30, security representatives began identifying structures, prompting local residents to protest by burning tires. The GOE plans to compensate those occupying the buildings identified for removal, but the official said they do not yet have a compensation formula. The process leading up to removal of the buildings will be long and difficult, he predicted, and the GOE expects significant local opposition.

[¶3.](#) (C) Comment: While this is an important initiative by the Egyptians to improve their anti-tunneling efforts, the effect will be mitigated by the fact that they have already discovered tunnels at least 800 meters in length.  
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